

25 Wood Street, Apt. 1702
Toronto, Ontario
M4Y 2P9.
November 2, 1991.

Dear Mr. Bly,

I am responding on behalf of my mother who is unable to use her right hand but wanted very much to assist you in your "survey." She is now 86 years old and a retired physician who practised pediatrics, obstetrics and anaesthesia in Peterborough, Ontario, for more than 30 years. My father was also a physician — a surgeon who unfortunately died when he was only 67 — of stomach cancer.

My mother would be happy to give any further information about the years when she attended Margaret Eaton, but would have to do so over the phone or on tape, because of the difficulty she has in writing — something that has made this stage in life very frustrating, as her mind is still very active and her interests are wide-ranging, including a continual drive to help others in whatever way she can. She was most insistent about responding to your letter. We both wish you luck with your project.

Sincerely, Kathryn Moffat Thurling

P.S. I have included a short form that gives a few more facts about my mother re her years after graduation from Margaret Eaton.

*Mackay
Wellsford Women* *78* *Hacker* *The Indomitable Doctors* *Janet Hall*

WOMEN IN MEDICINE IN THE 1920's and 1930's

by Colleen Archer

In the Canadian book The Indomitable Lady Doctors Carlotta Hacker writes, "During the twenties and thirties women physicians found that they had far more scope than they had had in the first decade of the century. At last they were moving in relatively large numbers into the hospitals and universities, into truly general practice and into specialist fields. They were being given work that was mentally tough - and they were also being offered jobs that were tough physically. Female as well as male doctors were recruited to pioneer the North, Canada's last frontier."

Although by 1920 women had indeed made great progress in medicine in Canada, their special problems were by no means over. French speaking women couldn't even study medicine in their own language in Canada until the 1940's. As for English speaking women, they could study at several universities but a great many branches of medicine were still closed to them due to a lack of opportunities for Internships and Residencies in teaching hospitals.

Dr. Agnes Moffat shared the joys and problems of many other women studying medicine at that time and I spoke to her recently in her home in Peterborough, Ontario. When she decided to enter medicine in 1925, McGill admitted 2 women out of 125 students and took no rotating women interns.

Due to university regulations, Dr. Moffat wasn't allowed to live in the residence after 2 years simply because she was in Medicine and not in Arts. While boarding and living in apartments she was robbed twice, and then one night a man broke in and tried to strangle her. A strong woman, Dr. Moffat fought him off and was then patched up at the hospital. She didn't tell anyone what had happened until years later, however. The reason?

"In those days, their solution would have been to say that no girls could live in apartments!"

After marriage to Dr. Magee in 1933, Dr. Moffat worked in London, England, in Toronto, and in 1937 she was formally admitted to the staff of Nicholls Hospital and St. Joseph's Hospital in Peterborough, Ontario. Here she was the only woman in practice until 1947.

Dr. Moffat says she found good health and great physical stamina essential in the ~~many~~ early days of her ~~many~~ busy practice, particularly after the birth of her children. She also feels that "inspiration and moral support are important for success in any profession, especially when you are in the minority group."

Many of the women doctors in the 20's and 30's had moral support from their husbands or parents, but a welcome source of professional support came with the formation of the Federation of Medical Women of Canada. Dr. Moffat says that being part of a group gave women doctors more self-confidence, for in a hospital situation all the other participants at staff meetings were likely to be male.

The Medical Women's International Association had been formed in 1920, and in 1924 the Federation of Medical Women of Canada followed "to promote the welfare and interest of medical women of Canada and of the Medical Profession and to co-operate with the British Medical Women's Federation and with similar Federations in other countries having like objects and policy." The chief planner was internationally known Dr. Maude Abbott. Other founders were Helen MacMurchy who was then in a senior position with the federal government, birth control advocate Elizabeth Bagshaw, surgeon Jennie Smillie, and general practitioners Janet Hall and Elizabeth Embury. By the following year there were 65 charter members.

In reading the reminiscences of medical women in the 20's and 30's it is impossible to overlook their genuine desire to be of service to humanity. This trait was essential during the depression when physicians often went unpaid and single women doctors were expected to give services free in welfare centres or in missions. Dr. Moffat says that during this period money arrangements were never made beforehand, and no patient was ever refused care.

(Agnes King Moffat)

Name Agnes Moffat

Graduation year 1925

Today's date: October 30 1991

I. Why did you choose to study at MES?

F.W. Moffat, my father, was a personal friend of the then principal, Mr. Naismith.

II. What alternatives did you consider?

Medical school at McGill University

III. What are some of your fondest memories of being a student at MES?

the friends I made in residence and the fun I had living there - away from my parents, who were very strict and attempted to control my social life - when it was reported that I'd been seen out with certain men friends, my parents insisted that I return to living at home & being a day student.

IV. What are some of your worst memories of being a student at MES?

I have no really unpleasant memories about the school - my worst memory is of my being forced to leave residence & live again at home

V. With respect to your course work what are some of your fondest memories?

VI. With respect to your course work what are some of your worst memories?

No "bad" memories of my courses

Won top prize in graduating year

VII. What do you remember about the school's principal and board?

✓

VIII. How do you think most students paid for their education at MES [summer jobs, parents paid....]?

Parents paid

IX. In what ways have you kept in touch with alumnae of MES?

Letters socially

X. What kind of work/volunteer activities did you do as a result of your education at MES?

wanted to get into a profession that would be

more of a lifetime career and so entered

medicine at McGill - was camp doctor at Camp

Tanamakoon summers of 1926, 1927

XI. Did you pursue further education following MES? Where? Why?

Medicine at McGill University MDCM

M.A. in Pathological chemistry

at University of Toronto (at The Banting Institute) internships at Toronto General Hospital &

Infants' Hospital in London England + outpatient work at other London hospitals, then on staff at Women's College Hospital before joining the Peterborough Clinic staff in 1935 - had attained specialization in pediatrics, obstetrics & anesthesia

XII. PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- A. Your year of birth: 1905
- B. Your country of birth: Canada
- C. Country of mother's birth: Canada
- D. Country of father's birth: Scotland
- E. When you entered MES what occupations did your parents have?
Mother's occupation: Retired high school teacher
Father's occupation: Industrialist (Moffat stoves)
- F. Where were you living before coming to MES?
City: Weston, Ontario
Province: (Ontario) Country: Canada
- G. Which school did you attend prior to entering MES?
Weston High School
What grade (level) did you complete at this school? 13
Was this a private or public school? public
- H. If you married, which year did you first do so: 1933
Married to: (name) Russell Kneale Magee
Occupation of husband when married: Surgeon

XIII. Would you be interested in receiving a copy of my abstract when I complete my study? Yes

Could you list other addresses than from the class of 39, and 41, or do you know of MES students who have passed on?

Would be happy to answer any more questions you might have. My home phone number in Peterborough is 705-745-3235

(25)

Interview with Mrs. Agnes Moffat
November 16, 1991
By John Byl

[discussed book titles re: her doctor experience]

She [Emma Scott Nasmith] was the chief organizer of MES when it was Literature and Expression. As far as the Physical Ed., Mary Hamilton was the head.... She was a very sweat sort of person, and very.... my father knew her because she lived in Owen Sound. At the time he was with his father and four brothers working in a business, metal type, at that time they were making propellers for boats, and that is why they were in Owen Sound. Then later they branched out into stoves. He was the Moffat Stove company....

Have you been in touch with Bessie Elizabeth Barron? She knows a lot about the school. Also Mary Barker. When I left to go into Medicine I sort of broke a lot of ties with MES graduates because I was into something else. I kept in touch with Bessie Pitt and Mary Barker, at least twice a year with each of them. They could tell you a lot more....

I won the award for general proficiency....

Tigh Na Mara
Ingonish, Nova Scotia
B0C 1KO

Oct 9 1991

Dear Mr Byl,

Your letter was received miraculously yesterday Oct 8! The above is my proper address, for 34 years.

Here are my answers to your questions, and also a list of friends from my years at MES, and Taremakwon. I would be relieved if you did not say I sent you their names. As of last Christmas they were all alive.

I have none of the other material you are interested in.

Good luck

Sincerely

Mary Barker

Name Mary Barker

Graduation year 19 25

Today's date: October 9 1991

I. Why did you choose to study at MES?

Because Miss Mary G Hamilton had been my "gym Teacher" and I very much admired her.

II. What alternatives did you consider?

Mc Gill School of Physical Education which also only granted a diploma

III. What are some of your fondest memories of being a student at MES?

Meeting students from across Canada
Working in harmony, being stimulated by practice
Teaching

IV. What are some of your worst memories of being a student at MES?

One only, being told one of my friends was a kleptomaniac by a member of the faculty, & that she would not be allowed to graduate on that account.
As a result, I didn't give a damn about graduating.

V. With respect to your course work what are some of your fondest memories?

Practice Teaching of young children in grade schools
Doing remedial gymnastics under Dr Wm Gellie's supervision

VI. With respect to your course work what are some of your worst memories?

Rully had none

VII. What do you remember about the school's principal and board?

Mrs Naomi, th beautiful and nice correct and a snob
Mrs Mary G Hamilton fair hard working ambitions
for her students. Have no idea of there was a Board

VIII. How do you think most student's paid for their education at MES [summer jobs, parents paid....]?

Parents paid

IX. In what ways have you kept in touch with alumnae of MES?

Friends and Christmas cards

X. What kind of ~~work~~/volunteer activities did you do as a result of your education at MES?

Taught an adult gym class here for three years
Initiated a "ski-in-school" program for six schools in the area.
Was on the Board of the 1987 Winter Games held in
Cape Breton VERY successful.

XI. Did you pursue further education following MES? Where?
Why?

University of Wisconsin, Columbia, Nels Bank with mark
summer schools only

XII. PERSONAL BACKGROUND:

- A. Your year of birth: 1965
- B. Your country of birth: Canada
- C. Country of mother's birth: Canada
- D. Country of father's birth: USA
- E. When you entered MES what occupations did your parents have?

Mother's occupation: Certified Public Accountant, she was
the first in North America.

Father's occupation: His own real estate & insurance company.

- F. Where were you living before coming to MES?

City: Toronto

Province: Ontario Country: Canada

- G. Which school did you attend prior to entering MES?

Banksome Hall

What grade (level) did you complete at this school? 12

Was this a private or public school? Private

- H. If you married, which year did you first do so: 19_____

Married to: (name) _____

Occupation of husband when married: _____

- XIII. Would you be interested in receiving a copy of my abstract when I complete my study? yes

Could you list other addresses than from the class of 39, and 41, or do you know of MES students who have passed on?



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